A *Lamp to the Head*

I stumbled over to my tiny desk, drunk at 3 a.m., replaying every dumb thing I said at the bar like a highlight reel of personal shame. I definitely said more than I remembered—which was saying something. Why do I keep doing this? Why do I leave my house just to get wrecked? I have *so* much time. I'm only 24, for fuck's sake.

I grabbed my green journal—the one I pretend I'm going to fill someday—flipped past a few cringey entries, and scribbled:

In my twenties, no matter how young I looked or how often I was told I had time, I was always haunted by the feeling that it was fleeting—gripped by the fear that time was short and I was running out of it…

I stared at the words.

Well, that answered my question. I have FOMO. How poetic. How tragic. How… corny.

Five minutes passed and then I heard footsteps creaking up the loud stairs. Kevin, my roommate, burst into my room and plopped onto my bed.

"Bro, what are you doing here?" I asked.

“Frank,” he gasped, “I think Ally’s going to murder me.” Ally was his girlfriend.

“What happened?”

“I messed up.”

“What’d you do?”

“I went to a house party last Thursday. Got completely plastered. Once everyone left, I asked the girl hosting if I could crash on her couch. She said yeah,” He paused.

“Then what?”

He looked like he was about to confess to a crime. “I—I don’t know how this happened…”

“Okay… what?”

Tears start forming in his eyes. “I ended up sleepwalking again, dude. I went into her room and passed out on her bedroom floor naked.”

“Oh, fuck.”

“Next thing you know, I wake up to her screaming, ‘OH HELL NAWWW!’”

I bursted out laughing. “Hahahahahaha!”

“It’s not funny, man! She was yelling, ‘GO! GO! GET THE FUCK OUTTA HERE!’ I ran to the living room, grabbing my clothes, begging her to let me put them on, apologizing like crazy. But she just kept shaking her head, going, ‘HELL NAH!’ She even grabbed a lamp off her nightstand, holding it from the cord, ready to swing it at me!”

“Jesus.”

“I had no choice- I bolted. 4:30 a.m., butt naked, running down the street. She chased me for two blocks straight! I thought I lost her, so I hid behind a trash bin, trying to put my pants and shoes back on. And then—BOOM! I get clocked in the back of the head.”

“No way.”

“With that lamp!”

“How did she find ya?!”

“I don’t know! Ninja instincts? Telepathy? Hatred-powered radar? All I know is I heard a rustle and then I saw stars. Bitch is fucking creep…”

“I don’t think you're allowed to call her a creep here.”

“Fair.”

“Okay, but… how does Ally factor in this?”

“Well, I went to meet her at the bar tonight, like she asked. But when I got there, I saw the girl from the party talking to her. through the window.”

“Oh no.”

“Oh *yes*. I panicked. Ran to a different bar. Checked my phone—*a hundred* missed calls from Ally.”

I opened my mini-fridge, tossed him a beer, and cracked one open for myself. “What do you think?” he asked.

I took a sip. “I think you’re cooked.”

“Thanks…”

"Look, worst-case scenario, she dumps you or slaps you."

"What if I deny it?"

"You think that'll work?"

"…No."

"Why not?"

"She always knows when I'm lying. She says my eyelids get twitchy. Like she can smell it."

"Most guys look guilty when they lie. You're just worse at it than average."

"I wish I could lie. I really do but we've always been honest with each other. She tells me stuff like, *'The highest form of intimacy is speaking the truth you feel in your love.'*"

I squinted. "That sounds like something from a couples yoga retreat. Drink your beer."

"But what if this ruins everything? What if I lose a good woman like her?"

"Then welcome to the club. Everyone loses a good woman at least once. Twice if you're doing it right."

We drank in silence. Then Kevin got up and headed towards his room. I climbed into bed, exhausted, and finally drifted off.

Thirty minutes later, I woke up to a strange sound. Like…Sizzling.

I turn on my lamp and there he is. Kevin. Pissing into my trash can at 4:32 a.m.

Naked. Eyes closed. Whispering, “I’m so sorry, Ally…”

“KEVIN!”

He flinched mid-stream, turned toward me like a confused raccoon, and said, “Frank… this isn’t the bathroom?”

“No, man.” Then I noticed. His piss was hitting the wall. “BRUH, *That’s* a poster of Miles Davis. You’re pissing on jazz!”

He blinked. Looked down. Shrugged. “He’d understand.”

I stared at him. “You got hit with a lamp the other night.”

He nodded solemnly. “And I’d take another one if it meant I could finish this pee in peace.”

I turned off the lamp and went back to sleep. I’ve seen enough.